

# Sunday Session for Grade 3,4,5

December

**Lesson Objective:** The children will learn that Jesus is God's son who became a human like us. The children will learn that Advent, the beginning of the liturgical year, is a time of preparation for the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

- Discussion of the Season of Advent
- Read & Discuss the 12 days of Christmas
- Service Project: Christmas card(s)
- If time permits, they can do activity pages, color sheets, review prayers etc. if you run out of time, hand out sheets for students to take home.
- Closing Prayer
- Dismissal

## Discuss the Season of Advent

There will be a little handmade **Advent wreath** for each classroom. (Remind the children that they can find an Advent wreath in every Catholic Church wherever they may attend Mass during the Season of Advent.

- **Advent:** a season in the Church calendar when we pray, prepare, and “wait” for Jesus Christ; it should not be a season that we rush through!
  - **“Happy New Year, Catholic Church!”** While almost everyone around the world celebrates New Year’s Day on January 1, the **First Sunday of Advent** marks the beginning of the new liturgical year in the Catholic Church!
  - Ask the children if they’ve ever had to “wait” for something special. Allow 2-3 children to share their stories.
  - **Explain:** A long, long time ago, God promised **His chosen people** (Israel) that He would send them a **Messiah** (a **Savior**) to lead them to **Heaven** (God’s home). Depending upon when they were born, the early generations of believers had to wait (and pray through) hundreds—or perhaps thousands—of years before **Jesus Christ** (God’s only Son, their Messiah) was born! *The Season of Advent gives us a sense of what it’s like to “wait” for something that has been promised!*
  - **Reminder:** We’re not waiting for Santa Claus to bring us presents!
    - During the first two weeks of Advent, we pray and prepare for the **Second Coming** of Jesus. Before He died, Jesus told His disciples that He would someday return. He died in the year 33 A.D., so, like those early believers, we’ve been waiting a long time, too! We really don’t know when He’ll

return, so our mood is a bit grim (*gloomy, sad*) at Mass during those first two weeks of Advent. *On the night before He died, Jesus shared a meal (the **Last Supper**) with His Apostles. Jesus told them that He would soon have to leave them, but He would send a **helper or advocate** (the **Holy Spirit**) to help them. After resurrecting from the dead, in a visit with His Apostles, Jesus told them that He had to leave them to be with His Father in Heaven, but He would someday return. On both occasions, they were, no doubt, confused by His remarks because He couldn't provide an explanation that they would have understood. Even today, as Catholic Christians, we celebrate **Pentecost** (when the **Holy Spirit** descended on the Apostles) and still believe that, someday, Jesus Christ will come back! (We will expound on that topic when the children are older.)*

- During the last two weeks of Advent, we pray and prepare for the anniversary of Jesus' birth. Each year, we remember and celebrate His birth on Christmas Day. *Remind the children that we are only born once! After that, we celebrate the anniversary of our birth on our birthday!* **QUESTION:** How long ago was Jesus born? **ANSWER:** Jesus was born approximately [current year] years ago! (Although we really don't know the exact date of His birth, we remember and celebrate the anniversary of His birth on December 25.)
- **Advent Wreath:** a circle (*representing God's unending love for us*) of green foliage, usually garland or leaves (*representing new life—God's life—within us*), three **violet** candles and one **rose**-colored (not pink) candle. **NOTE:** *In the Catholic Church, the **violet** color expresses a gloomy anticipation (waiting) or **somber** (serious) emotion. The **rose** (not pink) color expresses a sense of joy.*
- One violet candle is lit on the **First Sunday of Advent**. The priest wears a violet **chasuble**. (*A **chasuble** is an outer garment of color worn by a priest at Mass. It symbolizes the yoke of Christ and signifies charity. Refer to the finished chasuble craft in your zip lock bag to show the children an example of a chasuble.*)
- Two violet candles are lit on the **Second Sunday of Advent**. Again, the priest wears a violet chasuble.
- Two violet candles and the rose-colored candle are lit on the **Third Sunday of Advent**. On the Third Sunday of Advent, we begin to anticipate the anniversary of Jesus' birth and begin making plans to celebrate Christmas. The priest wears a rose-colored chasuble on the Third Sunday of Advent.
  - **NOTE:** *The priest will not decorate the church until a day or two before Christmas Eve! Even though lights may be strung on Christmas trees in church before that time, they will not be turned on until the Anticipated Mass on Christmas Eve.*
  - **FYI:** *Christmas is more than one day! It is an entire season! It begins with the Anticipated Mass on Christmas Eve and lasts until we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus Christ in January! We'll discuss more details about the Christmas Season in Grades 2-5.*
- Three violet (*somber, gloomy; waiting*) candle candles and the rose-colored (*joyful*) candle are lit on the **Fourth Sunday of Advent**. Once again, the priest wears a violet chasuble.
- **Activity:** If battery operated candles work, please light them to help explain the order in which the candles are lit throughout the Advent Season. If it's a construction paper wreath, you'll be able to add and/or remove the construction paper flames into/from the top of the candles.

## **Read and discuss the packet of the 12 Days of Christmas**

### **Service Project: Christmas Cards**

**NOTE:** *Because these greeting cards will be distributed to local needy families, residents of local nursing homes, and/or priests and seminarians in the diocese, students will sign only their first name on each card! We will dispose of all cards that have first and last names!*

For the remainder of today's class, your students will prepare "**Christmas Cards**" for local needy families, residents of local nursing homes or, perhaps, for priests and seminarians in our diocese. Distribute the color sheets. *(See two samples at the end of this lesson plan.* Allow your students to color one or two pictures. Rather than rushing to complete both cards, encourage them to do a really good job for the recipients of the greeting cards. While they color, invite the entire class to recite **The Lord's Prayer**, **Hail Mary**, and/or **Glory Be** for health and well-being of the people who will receive these greeting cards! **Reminder:** Your students should **sign their first name only on the greeting card! No last names!**

### **Closing Prayer**

Together as a class, recite one of your class' grade-level prayers as the closing prayer.

**NOTE:**

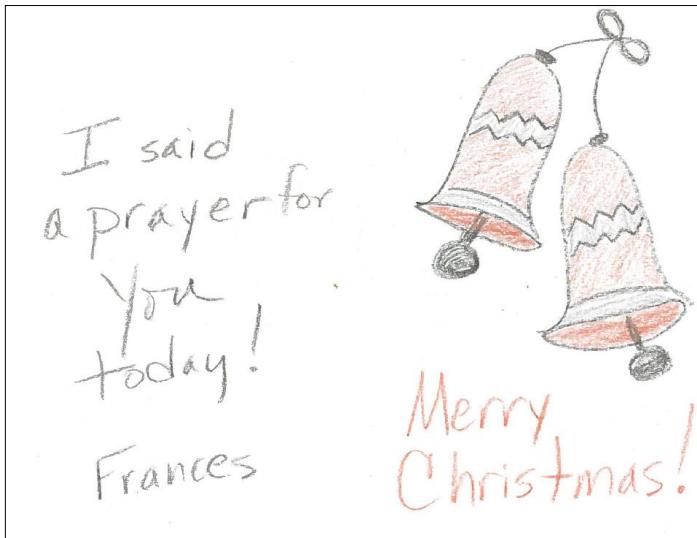
**Greeting card samples are included on the next page.**

**Note:** The front and back covers will be completely drawn/written by the children.

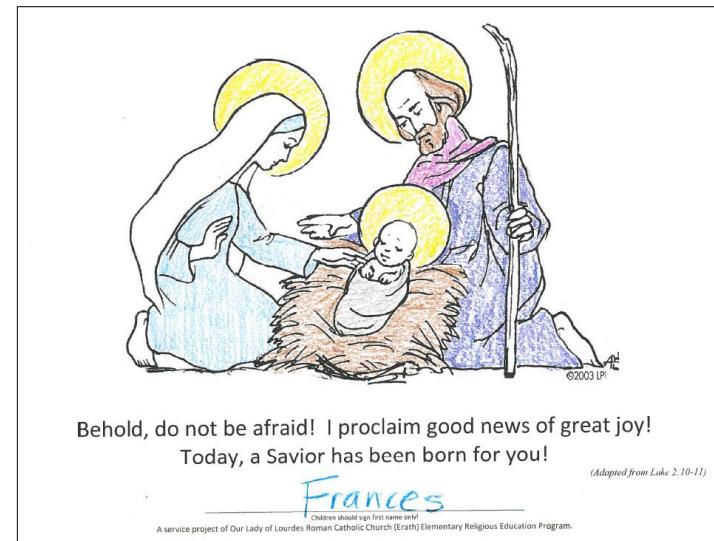
Please remind them that **their card will be folded in half**,  
so they should draw a design that fits on a half sheet of paper!

### Christmas Greeting Card – Sample 1

Back and Front Cover of greeting card  
(drawn by the child)

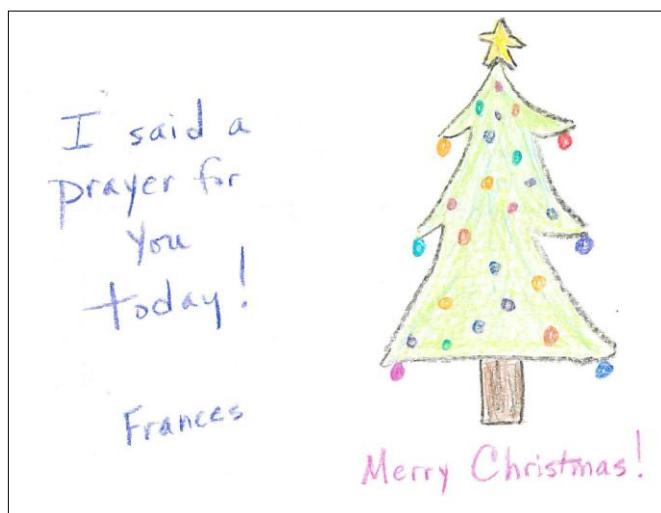


Inside of greeting card  
(photocopied, but should be colored)



### Christmas Greeting Card – Sample 2

Back and Front Cover of greeting card  
(drawn by the child)



Inside of greeting card  
(photocopied, but should be colored)

